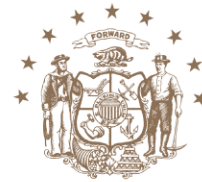




SONDY POPE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
80TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 19, 2019

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REP POPE: NEARLY 280 SCHOOL DISTRICTS LOSE AID TO PAY FOR VOUCHERS

MADISON, Wis. – Representative Sondy Pope (D-Mt. Horeb) released a [Legislative Fiscal Bureau memo](#) today illustrating the impact vouchers have on funding Wisconsin's public school districts. Incoming voucher students are currently funded by reductions in general aid that would otherwise be paid to pupils' districts of residence. The loss of this aid can only be recouped by raising local property tax. Of Wisconsin's 422 school districts, 279 receive less aid due to the existence of the voucher programs. In response, Rep. Pope, the ranking member of the Committee on Education and a member of the Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding released the following statement:

"What we are beginning to see more and more clearly is a snowball effect of vouchers negatively impacting Wisconsin's public schools. As the voucher cap continues to increase, we are seeing runaway costs paying for an unnecessary competing school system that has not proven to be any more effective or successful than public schools," said Rep. Pope. "What is even more troubling is that in every city we visited, the Blue Ribbon Commission heard in detail how this program negatively affects communities, yet the commission decided to completely ignore this testimony. This willful ignorance to appease pro-voucher donors, and their recent public rejection of the governor's education budget clearly says to me that the Republicans were never sincere in making funding changes that are needed to give every public school student a better chance to succeed."

Governor Evers' budget makes several changes to the voucher programs that would begin to repair the damage that years of aid reductions have caused. The three voucher programs would be capped at 2020-21 school year levels and the Special Needs Voucher program would be phased out after the 2019-20 school year. These initiatives would save local property taxpayers nearly \$30 million in property tax in fiscal year 2020-21 alone. Governor Evers' budget would also require existing voucher schools to be accredited and teachers at these schools to be licensed – increasing both accountability and quality of education and educators.

"After serving several years as our State Superintendent, Governor Evers has seen firsthand the negative effect of vouchers on schools all around the state. As governor, he is taking meaningful action to address this problem that the people of Wisconsin have asked him to fix. His budget will undoubtedly produce better outcomes for students and provide relief to taxpayers who have been footing the bill to fund religious, for-profit voucher schools."

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